

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05
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R 181430Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2883
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 9174

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR SO ET IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN MISSIONS TO MOGADISCIO AND ADDIS ABABA

1. SUMMARY: TWO SEPARATE ITALIAN MISSIONS TO HORN OF AFRICA, BOTH UNDER LEADERSHIP OF MFA UNDER SECRETARIES OF STATE, WERE GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL FROM A GOI POINT OF VIEW. ITALIANS FOUND ETHIOPIANS OBSESSED WITH PROBLEM OF ERITREA AND BOTH SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS INTRANSIGENT ABOUT NEGOTIATING ON OGADEN. END SUMMARY.

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2. MFA DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS RACHELE BRIEFED US MAY 16 ON LAST WEEK'S ITALIAN MISSIONS TO HORN--ONE TO ADDIS ABABA LED BY MFA UNDER SECRETARY RADI, THE OTHER TO MOGADISCIO LED BY UNDER SECRETARY FOSCHI. RACHELE SAID THAT ITALIANS CONSIDER BOTH MISSIONS SUCCESSFUL PARTLY BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO LIMIT POLITICAL CONTENT OF TRIPS AND FOCUS ON PROBLEMS OF ITALIAN COMMUNITY (IN ETHIOPIA) AND QUESTIONS OF BILATERAL COOPERATION.

3. IN ADDIS, ITALIANS AGREED TO IMPROVE TRADE RELATIONS, TO GRANT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CREDITS AND HUMANITARIAN AID, AND TO PROCEED WITH A TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM INVOLVING PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION, HOUSING, AND AGRICULTURE. IN RETURN, ETHIOPIANS ACKNOWLEDGED ROLE OF RESIDENT ITALIAN NATIONALS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY AND AGREED TO PAY FAIR COMPENSATION TO THEM FOR NATIONALIZED PROPERTY, TO PERMIT THEM FREE MOVEMENT TO AND FROM ETHIOPIA, AND TO EXPEDITE THE GRANTING OF EXIT AND RE-ENTRY PERMITS. RACHELE SAID THAT GOI WAS PARTICULARLY GLAD TO HAVE THESE COMMITMENTS BY ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING RESIDENT ITALIANS AS THEY ARE CONSTANTLY COMPLAINING TO GOI ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS. DELEGATION WAS ABLE TO REMOVE NUMEROUS POLEMICAL STATEMENTS ABOUT OGADEN AND ERITREA FROM COMMUNIQUE.

4. AS TO ITALIAN IMPRESSIONS OF ETHIOPIA, RACHELE SAID THAT ETHIOPIANS WERE IN POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND BECAUSE THEY HAVE DEFEATED SOMALIA (FOR WHICH THEY ARE GIVING CUBANS NO CREDIT AT ALL) AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE CRUSHED INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO MENGISTU REGIME. ETHIOPIANS ARE NOW OBSESSED WITH ERITREA AND TOLD ITALIANS THAT PROBLEM OF ERITREA IS LIKE PROBLEM OF OGADEN--THE PRODUCT OF A FOREIGN INVASION. IN THE ERITREAN CASE, INVADERS ARE ALL ARAB COUNTRIES FROM CONSERVATIVE TO RADICAL REGIMES. ONLY LIBYA AND SOUTH YEMEN ARE NOT SUPPORTING ERITREANS. ITALIANS NOTED THAT SUDANESE WERE SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL CONDEMNATION IN THIS CONTEXT. ETHIOPIANS EXPRESSED CONDOLENCES FOR MURDER OF ALDO MORO
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AND SAID ERITREANS WERE JUST LIKE RED BRIGADE: BOTH ARE EXTERNALLY SUPPORTED TERRORISTS WHO WANT TO DESTROY DEMOCRATIC STATES. ITALIAN DELEGATION APPARENTLY DID NOT TAKE THIS FORMULATION AT ALL WELL. ITALIANS DID HAVE IMPRESSION THAT CUBANS HAVE NOT GIVEN TOTAL SUPPORT TO ETHIOPIANS IN ERITREA. AS FOR SOMALIA, ETHIOPIANS WERE INTRANSIGENT AND SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL SOMALIS MET VARIOUS CONDITIONS INCLUDING RENUNCIATION OF HELP TO OGADENIS AND OF PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

5. IN SOMALIA, TRIP WENT WELL FROM BILATERAL POINT OF VIEW. ITALIANS AGREED TO VARIOUS AID PROJECTS INCLUDING TEACHING OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS RETURNING FROM THE SOVIET UNION. SOMALIS DID NOT WANT TO DISCUSS REFUGEE PROBLEMS BUT, RATHER, ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROJECTS ABANDONED BY DEPARTED SOVIET TECHNICIANS. ON ETHIOPIA, SOMALIS WERE STUBBORN AND SAID THEY WOULD NOT GIVE UP PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR OGADENIS. ITALIANS FOUND SITUATION IN MOGADISCIO CALM WITH NO EVIDENCE OF OPPOSITION TO REGIME AND WITH PRO-WESTERN, ANTI-SOVIET TREND STILL DOMINANT.
GARDNER

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